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Burnout

Scenario Supplement for Incursion

By Morrie Mullins Former Living Force Plot Director and Campaign Designer

Former Living Force Plot Director Morrie Mullins presents a supplement to the campaign's newest scenario. In "Burnout," a mysterious transmission sheds light on a Thaereian space station that deals in drugs, weapons, and slaves. "Burnout" ties into the June Living Force scenario, Incursion, the first part of the "Belted In" trilogy.

Recently, an interview began making the rounds of the Holonet in the Cularin area. The interview consists of a conversation between two figures, both of whom are backlit so that only their outlines are visible, and both of whom seem to have gone to some length to disguise their voices. The interviewer is female, but beyond that, little can be discerned. She speaks deliberately, and the attempt to modify her speech patterns is clear. She speaks Basic, and the colloquialisms she uses reveal that, if she's not actually native to Cularin, she's been here for some time. The interviewee, on the other hand, speaks roughly, in Basic that's sometimes broken with phrases in Dosh or Rodian. He - - and there can be no doubt that the interviewee is male, as can be seen from the content of the interview - - fidgets in his seat, seemingly worried that the interview might end without warning. There are no newsnet logos attached, and no single newsnet in Cularin has claimed responsibility, though all of them have run the interview exhaustively. The message that comes across has many in the system more than a little concerned.

Interviewer: Thank you for contacting me. I'm glad you did. What should I call you?

Interviewee: Don't matter. X. Just call me X. This all gonna be masked?

Interviewer: Absolutely. You have my word on it. No one will be able to trace it to you.

X: And you?

Interviewer: I'm masked as well. No one will be able to find me and beat your identity out of me. Everything is as safe as it can be, considering the circumstances. May I set the stage?

She pauses, and the shadow opposite her nods.

Interviewer: I'm here, speaking with X. X is a member of a very prominent trade organization here in Cularin. One that's run by locals, rather than the often-problematic Metatheran Cartel. X contacted me, under conditions of

anonymity, to request an interview. He's learned things that the people of Cularin should know about, if they're to defend themselves from all the threats that have emerged in the last few months, and which will likely continue to emerge. So tell me, X -- what is it that we need to know?

X: It's Burnout.

Interviewer: What is Burnout?

X: Burnout's a space station in Thaereian space. Nasty place. Don't want to go there if you don't have to. There's bad places in Thaere, but not many as bad as Burnout.

Interviewer: And what's so bad about this place, this "Burnout"?

X: What goes on there. You take every bad thing Riboga did, when he ran Cularin. You multiply that times ten. You then figure out how you can take what you get, and make it even worse. Then you kinda get close to what Burnout's like.

Interviewer: Sounds unpleasant. Can you give us some examples?

X: Well, there's the standard. They run spice through there, for one. Other chems, they've got a regular pipeline. Weapons, information -- lots of Bothans in Thaere, and they dig on the information brokerage -- even people. Lots of people.

Interviewer: Burnout is a slave trading facility?

X: Sort of. It's lots more than that, but they run slaves through there. It's got pens in it, corrals, almost. It's not just slaves, it's animals, too. Exotics. If there's something someone might want to buy, but maybe the Senate doesn't like that kind of thing being sold, well, you can probably find someone shipping it through Burnout.

Interviewer: I'm sure our viewers will find it hard to believe that the government of Thaere allows this kind of activity to continue within their borders. After all, they're a duly assigned protector of Cularin, with a mandate from the Galactic Senate. They wouldn't allow this kind of Hutt-trading to go on, so it must be that they don't know. That's the only logical explanation, isn't it?

X: You aren't that dumb. Your viewers aren't that dumb. Thaere, it's more than it looks like, and less. You wanna talk government? [Swears in Dosh] Their government is their navy. No other public infrastructure there. Oh, they've gone through some leadership changes, but tell you what -- they don't listen to nobody who don't have the backing of the navy. That Tramsig, he's the real power in Thaere. So when we're talking about the government of Thaere, we're really talking about their navy. Now, what that makes your question say is, does Thaere's navy know about this place, with the slaves and the drugs and the weapons that nobody who's not in the army should have? And the answer is, they ain't dumb. They see as good as anyone. They know what's going on. "Belted In" Trilogy Summary Nirama, the enigmatic alien crime lord, has an agenda -- a very public agenda. He's not happy about recent goings-on in Cularin, and he's less happy with the strangeness in the asteroid belt that

he calls "home." Is Nirama helping the people of Cularin, are the people helping him, or is it actually mutual?

Interviewer: Tell our viewers what the Thaereian Navy is doing about this problem, then.

X: Doing? I'll tell you what they're doing. They're investing. It's not a problem. It's an opportunity. It's a way for them to make a little money, maybe a lot of money.

Interviewer: Are you suggesting that the Thaereian Navy, the appointed protectors of Cularin, are corrupt?

X: Nope. You can't be corrupt if everyone's doing the same thing. Corruption's a sickness. It's that little infected part of something that may make the rest of the body sick, and maybe kill you. If the whole body's sick, though, and it's got a fever that just makes it want to do more of the stuff that got it sick, that's not corruption. That's just plain wrong. I ain't no Jedi, but if I were, I'd probably say something like the whole Thaereian Navy is darksiders.

Interviewer: That's disturbing. If a Jedi said it, that might mean the Thaereiens had a large number of Force-users at their disposal. Is that what you mean?

X: No. Just armies of people who will do whatever they're told. You look at what's happened over the last couple years - - our timeline - - and you see that they've had folks defect. Most of them ran as far away as they could, but there's some that joined up with Cularin's militia. One of the commanders, even, in the new militia. You don't need an army of people who use the Force to kill folks. You just need an army, and with a big enough army, it don't matter how many Force users are against you.

Interviewer: Even a whole Jedi academy?

X: How big an army you think you'd want to bring, if you were going to try to hold Cularin with that many Jedi and baby Jedi here? Think about that number, and then think about this. There are 173,000 soldiers in the Thaereian Navy.

The interviewer shuffles her notes.

Interviewer: Where did you get that number? I've not heard anything bigger than... "Standing forces of 10,000 assigned to protection of Cularin." That's from their charter.

X: Yeah. Well, most of them don't read too good. And as to the numbers, well... once you get past what they can count on fingers and toes, it's all the same. Ten thousand, a hundred and seventy-three thousand - - either way, it's a lot. But I stand by my numbers. Besides, their charter don't say they can't have more. Just that ten thousand was how many they were required to put on Cularin defense duty. It's more. You run enough goods in and out of Cularin, you see how many ships there are, you figure out that there's a blasted lot of them. Big army. Not that many of us.

Interviewer: So, back to Burnout. Are you saying that the entire Thaereian military establishment is aware of, and profiting from, the existence of this immoral set of operations on Burnout?

X: Aware of? Sure. Profiting from? Don't be dumb. The ones that profit are the ones that always profit. The leaders. Everyone else just does what they're told and stays alive.

Interviewer: Is Burnout a threat to Cularin?

X: There's bigger threats. Burnout's just a stopover. It's a place things get traded. But some of those things are people. Cularin people. Folks disappear, and if they're never found, then maybe they got herded off to Burnout and sold to the Hutts.

Interviewer: Is Burnout a Hutt stronghold?

X: Don't think so. Never heard of one being there.

Interviewer: I think I - - that is, our viewers - - have a hard time believing that after everything Senator Wren and Nirama have done to prevent slavery in Cularin, that neither of them would react to hearing that Cularin citizens are being taken just outside our borders and sold into slavery.

X: If the Senator knew, maybe. Don't know if she does. She's on Coruscant, most of the time, taking care of home from a long ways away. As to Nirama... I'm betting he knows. And is pretty unhappy about it. But there's a right time and a right place to strike, and this may not be that time. Even if Burnout really is the right place. You don't get to be powerful like Nirama without knowing when to fight and when not to fight.

Interviewer: He does seem rather astute. So, anything else our viewers need to know about Burnout? Aside from it being a slave-trading, drug-running, weapon-smuggling hive of malcontents and rejects from every corner of the galaxy, which the Thaereian Navy - - the body charged by the Galactic Senate with protecting Cularin - - knows about, and allows to continue to exist because of their own financial interests in the place?

X: I think that sums it up.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time. Burnout... it's something to keep an eye on, Cularin.

And with that, the transmission ends.